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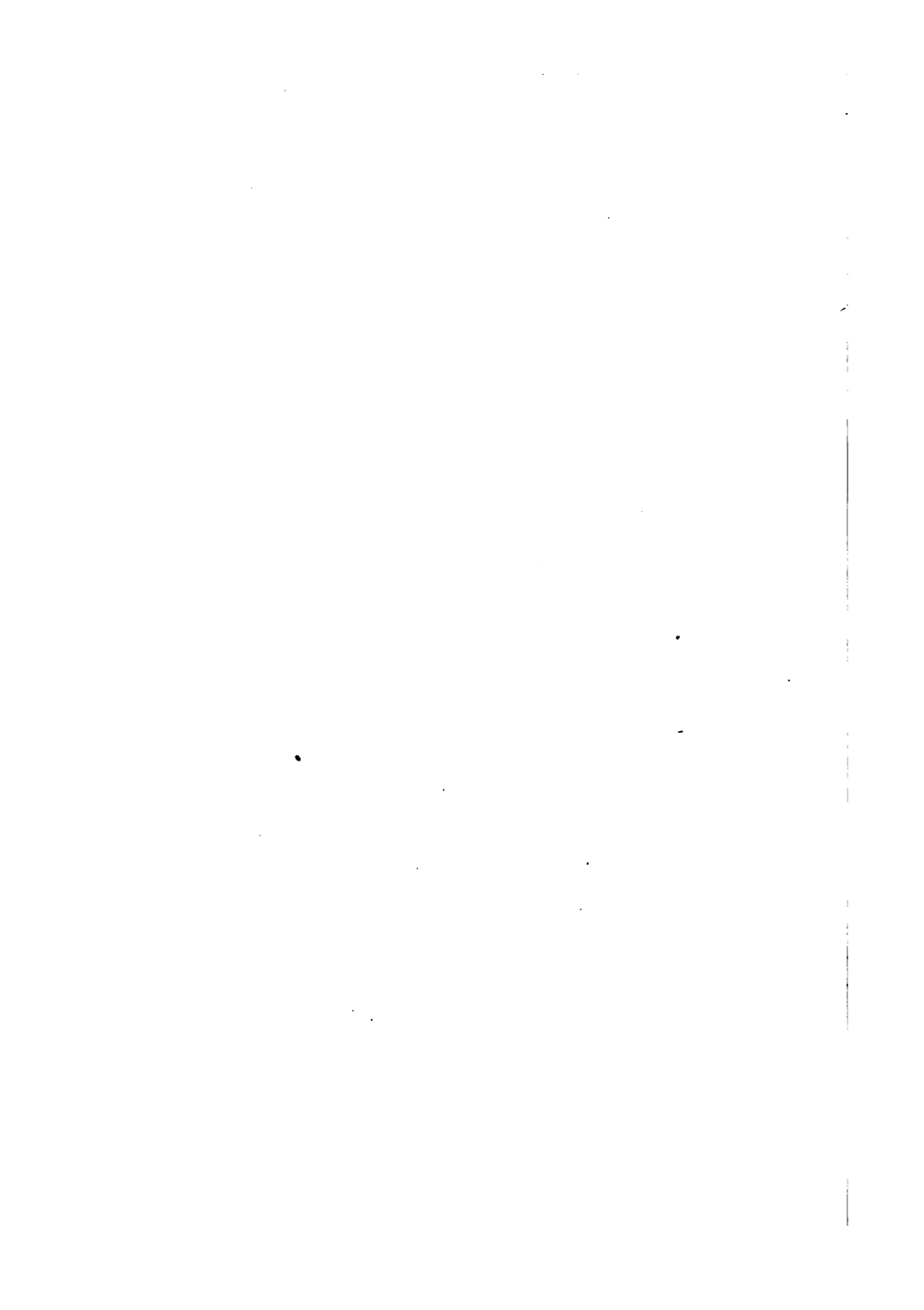


INFIDELS
LOGICALLY SILENCED.









INFIDELS LOGICALLY SILENCED:

OR,

INFIDELS EASILY BROUGHT
TO THE THRESHOLD OF CHRISTIANITY
BY A LOGICAL NECESSITY;

OR,

NATURE, DEISM, AND THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

BY

WILLIAM JENKINS, L.C.M.,

EDUCATED AT GLASGOW COLLEGE.

"Ere the radiant sun
Sprang from the east, or 'mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serenest lamp;
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorn'd the globe,
Or wisdom taught the sons of men her lore;
Then liv'd the Almighty One" AKESIDE.

LONDON:

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J. B. SUMNER, 101, EDGWARE ROAD, W.

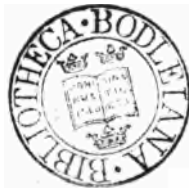
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P R E F A C E

“It is a sad tendency which in the present day pervades our literature to a very deplorable extent,—the tendency to find a world without a Maker; life without a providence; the Bible without inspiration; and its history without God.” Now if this practical Atheism be so prevalent in the literary world, how much more prevalent must we expect it to be in common life, in our every-day business, conduct, and conversation.

This Essay, whose title leads the reader to expect very close reasoning on the most important subject the human mind can grapple with, has the approval of many eminent divines, both of the Established and Dissenting churches.

The Author acknowledges his special obligations to Professor McCOSH, of Queen's College, Belfast, and to the Revs. Messrs. CADMAN, CHALMERS, GARBETT, and GARWOOD—all of London, for their very valuable suggestions and kindness; indeed, but for the favourable opinion of this Essay by these very distinguished, experienced, highly influential and esteemed clergymen, he does not think he would have offered it thus to the public.

The Author is peculiarly indebted to those two most profound thinkers, most able reasoners, and most obliging gentlemen—Dr. McCOSH and the Rev. Mr. GARBETT—for their able criticisms of this Essay, which they made when they could ill spare time amid their own arduous and important duties.

Although the author has the honour to make reference here to the above learned and clerical gentlemen, yet he does not commit them to any of his blunders in composition nor to any particular view or argument in the Essay. He merely wishes to express that their names are a guarantee that this Essay is in defence of Christianity, and that they have given their general consent to that effect. But in addition to this, Dr. McCosh “recommends that the little work entitled, ‘Infidels Logically Silenced,’ is

written by an independent thinker, and that his arguments are well worthy of being weighed by all who claim for themselves the privilege of independent thought."

This Essay is divided into three parts, with an Introduction and Conclusion. The first part treats of Nature; the second of Deism; and the third part is a direct proof from power for the existence of the God of the Bible.

If a single unbeliever or sceptic who reads this is led to see how contrary Infidelity is to common sense and reason, and is brought by the blessing of God to embrace Christianity—and if on the other hand, a single Christian who reads this is more established in the faith, or is more inclined to convince and establish others—the author, after his two year's labour in composing this Essay, will consider himself richly compensated for his pains.

It is now twelve years since the germ of the first part entered his mind, and that was whilst arguing with a sceptical fellow student; it struck the author that according to infidel views, it was useless to argue at all on any subject, for all our arguing could not alter chance, haphazard, blind fate, or absolute unalterable necessity, which is the essence of Atheism.

Now, this Essay goes to show that the Christian, in believing that the Author of Nature is the God of the Bible, ought not to be chargeable with superstition, fanaticism, self-will, or ignorant zeal in this belief, because he is enabled by God's blessing to give reasons for his belief, and arguing from common sense grounds, refute the infidel by his own arguments and his own mode of reasoning. If this be so, then the infidel is bound as an honest man to give up his Infidelity as untenable, and betake himself to Christianity.

INTRODUCTION.

I SHOULD be very sorry, indeed, to use the term infidel in an offensive sense. By it I mean specially the Atheist, the Materialist, the Deist, the Pantheist, and the Secularist.

This last is supposed to be the most respectable; but the Secularist has no fundamental principle; no standard of morality and happiness.

I decline to substitute the term "Free-thinkers," because they all claim to be the creatures of circumstances, and say that men's characters are made *for* them and not *by* them. If they are thus the creatures of circumstances, and are bound by the influence of blind fate, then these circumstances and this fate must fetter their freedom of thought; so, then, what becomes of their free-thinking?

There are avowed and unavowed infidels; this latter class is the most numerous. The most generic definition of infidel in a Scripture sense, is, perhaps, one whose heart is turned away from the God of the Bible and from godliness; and in our own day, we call one an infidel who opposes Christianity, or disbelieves the Bible in whole or in part.

By much reflection, and by much intercourse and discussion with infidels, I have discovered a method short and effectual of taking the sandy ground from their feet, and of showing them that they only are wise who betake themselves for a sure foundation to the "Rock of Ages," viz., Christ, the Bible, and the Bible God.

I have applied this method with complete success to some of the most noted infidels in the west of London, and in every instance the infidels have either remained silent, or virtually said, "Since you have shown that the belief in nothing but nature and a non-Bible God is so absurd, give us direct proof of the existence of the Bible God."

Infidels, when put on the defensive, seem much at a loss to defend their opinions, and unless closely watched, they will fly off at a tangent to attack the Bible and the character of professing Christians; but let them fight their battle in their own camp, let them first get their own opinions right and true before they attempt the overthrow of Christianity.

In disproving their ideas of nature and a non-Bible God, I try to reduce their views to an absurdity, and then I use an argument drawn from the senses, reason, and experience, or an argument from causation or power, briefly to prove to them the Being of the Bible God.

Of course I am quite aware that to refute infidels is one thing—to convert them is another, and that the best evidence of the truth of Christianity is the witness

within one's self by believing in Christ to the saving of the soul; yet, humanly speaking, the way is made more clear, there is less excuse to them, and the blessing of God is always on the side of truth in argument, because God is the Author of all truth—meaning by truth, everything real, right, and good—not mere facts, for though facts are always true as facts, they are not always right and good—a theft is a fact, but it is always wrong. God is also the Author of our reasoning powers, therefore he will bless what is his own, especially if it leads to truth itself. Besides all this, we are expressly told to “prove all things,” “to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us,” “earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and “to convince the gainsayer.”

The creed of some infidels is, that nothing exists but nature, that nature is the sum of everything that exists, that it is eternal, and consists of matter in motion coming in contact with matter in motion; that motion is an essential quality of matter; that matter is that which is capable of motion; that soul, mind, or spirit, is only a quality of matter in a certain state of development, and that nothing can be known to exist except by our senses, reason, and experience.

Other infidels profess to believe that there is a Supreme Being who made nature; or that nature and the Supreme Being are so blended together that the one is part and parcel of the other; that the Supreme

Being is, as it were, the soul of nature, and not distinct from it, and that the different organizations and developments are only the different modes of God's existence manifested in and by nature.

The Christian, on the contrary, believes and knows that there is no God but the God of the Bible, who is the Author of nature, who is distinct from and independent of nature, and that nature is not eternal, but was created and is preserved by the God of the Bible, and has His divinity stamped upon it. This divine impression on nature is manifested in the laws of matter and mind—these laws imply a lawgiver of intelligence and power, superior to matter, and superior to the human mind.

PART I.



NATURE IS NOT THE ONLY EXISTENCE.

*PROPOSITION:—TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NOTHING BUT
NATURE IS BLIND FATALISM AND A GROSS ABSURDITY.*

MY mode of dealing with such infidels is the following : I agree with them, for the sake of argument, that there is no Bible God, that the Bible is a mere human production, and that there is nothing but nature. I consent also for a time to become the docile pupil of an intelligent, conscientious infidel, with the view of his teaching me to be a wiser, better, and happier man than the Bible can make me.

In the first place, then, I ask the infidel how he can prove that nature is eternal ; for the term nature, from *nascor natus*, means born or produced. To say that a thing is eternal—that is, without beginning or end—and yet born or produced, is absurd, and a contradiction in terms.

The infidel has no proof of the eternity of nature,

and yet believes its eternity; and he says he has no proof of the Bible God, and, therefore, disbelieves his existence. He believes the one without proof, and does not believe the other from an alleged want of proof—which is absurd and inconsistent.

But let it be granted that nature is eternal—let it be admitted that nothing but nature exists; then everything that is, must be and could not have been otherwise—therefore all the evils that exist are natural, and must be ascribed to nature; so that the blame due to any evil is due to nature, because nature alone produced it.

But how can we blame nature or anything in nature, since there is nothing higher than nature as a standard of right and wrong? If we blame nature we blame ourselves, for we are a part of nature, and those things that we blame are also parts of nature. Here, then, we find parts of nature blaming parts of nature, whilst the infidel's creed is, that the parts blamed, as well as the parts unblamed, are alike the productions of nature, for all is natural and could not be helped—which is absurd—because where is the use or sense of blaming a thing that could not be helped, for which there was no hope of remedy, and for the blaming of which there was no test as a standard of wrong?

If nature is the author of everything, then every state of things—every event, change, and circumstance—every organization and development—every effect and every cause, must be, and could not have been otherwise.

If this be so, then, everything done by skill or art,

every thought, word, and act of man, every religion and opinion, every book, and the Bible itself, is a production of nature; for all these are, on this supposition, the developments of nature in her progress. If this be so, why then do we distinguish between natural and artificial? Why is religion so universal? Why is the essence of religion a belief in the supernatural? Why do so many books, especially the Bible, speak of a supernatural being as the author of nature? Why could such terms as God, miracle, prophecy, revelation, &c., exist? There is absurdity in all this, for if there is nothing but nature, and if humanity, the highest developed part of nature, almost universally believes that there is something supernatural,—is not this clearly an absurdity?

For infidels to believe that nothing but nature exists, and that something unnatural exists at the same time, is absurd; they speak as if Infidelity were natural, and Christianity unnatural, whilst they believe there is nothing but nature. It is true that the term unnatural has a double meaning; it may mean an unusual event or a supernatural event; but in either case the views of the infidel are absurd.

Nature develops and organizes itself, and then finds fault with its own development. For how comes it, if all be the production of nature, that nature so organized and developed certain men, that they made the Bible; that so many men and women in a certain state of development believe, or profess to believe, the Bible to be divine, and that so few in a certain state of develop-

ment condemn the Bible as false and contradictory ; and yet in contradiction to all this, the Bible tends to subvert the belief in nothing but nature, and has succeeded in establishing the belief in the best parts of humanity, that nature is the production of an Almighty God ?

It is absurd to think that nature has set up something higher and superior to itself, whilst there is nothing but nature ; this makes infidels believe in a natural supernatural, which is absurd.

If nothing exists but nature, then all is blind fatalism ; there can be no right nor wrong, good nor evil, truth nor error ; no responsibility, accountability, blame, praise, reward, punishment ; for the things we call wrong are as much a part of nature as the things we call right, and could not be helped, therefore there can be no standard to judge by, or decide which is right or wrong ; so that all murders, suicides, adulteries, thefts, oppressions, wars, drunkenness, &c., are parts of nature in a certain state of development, and could not be helped ; and yet we find almost every human being denounce these as unnatural and as great crimes ; which is contrary to our reason.

Nature, if it alone exists, must be the author of all physical, intellectual, moral, political, social, and religious evils ; yet infidels do not blame nature for these evils, but consider nature all right ; in fact, they make nature their most delightful theme ; if so, then there must be something else than nature, because to say that nature

is all right, and that religions are all wrong, or that any religion or anything is wrong, when they believe there is nothing but nature, is a direct contradiction. According to their own showing, nature is all right ; so that they believe there is something else, and a nothing else, than nature at the same time ; which is absurd.

Nature gives us no account of itself, of the evils that exist, their origin, use, and remedy. We have no explanation from nature why it develops some human beings to be fanatics, bigots, hypocrites, idiots,—why so many are superstitious, deluded, infirm, diseased, ignorant, poor, cruel, vicious. We know not why it is that nature has been so partial, making only a few philosophic, scientific, learned, rich, powerful, healthy, good. Would it not have been better if nature had developed all to be perfectly good, wise, happy, and useful, instead of the sorrow, sin, misery, and folly, that abound?

Why has nature destined all animals to die ; all vegetables to decay ; all minerals to corrode ? Would it not have been better had nature developed and organized all men and women to be philosophers, and to have lived for ever in the enjoyment of philosophy ? All this would have made a better nature and more creditable to it. But instead of this, how often have we philosophers, just when they are in the zenith of their intellectual greatness, enfeebled and consigned to death.

Nature, in many respects, appears bad, foolish, and capricious ; as if making sport of, or deceiving the best part of herself, viz., humanity.

How are we to know that humanity, according to infidel views, is the best developed part of nature? How are we to know that reason is superior to instinct, appetite, or blind organization?

We find pain, sorrow, and trouble universal in our rational race, and that many, from the unguided or misguided sway of their natural reason, become scourges and plagues to themselves, and to all around them, in the excessive gratification of their selfishness, lust, pride, and ambition.

Is that a better development than the poor, crawling, harmless worm; the innocent dove; the meek and gentle lamb; the feathered songster of the grove; or the insects that flutter in a sunbeam? How do infidels know that these are not better developed than man, and that they are not happier than man?

If nature, after eternally developing itself, has produced so much evil; if, in its present highly advanced year, it seems to be getting crazy and doted, what guarantee have we that nature may not in future develop itself, in some form, still worse? If it be true, as infidels assert, that all religions are bad, and that Christianity is the worst, is it not evident that nature is, as a matter of fact, getting crazy, if there is nothing but nature? For there is nothing progressing so much in the world as Christianity. Mohammedanism has been standing still or retrograding for 300 years; professed Infidelity is losing ground; science and Christianity go hand in hand, taking a stronger hold on the minds of men. But according to

infidels, nature must be doted in developing such a multiplicity of Bibles, churches, clergy, missionaries, Scripture-readers, Bible-women ; such a multiplicity of religious tracts, revivals, prayer-meetings, and Bible-classes. Nature must be crazy in developing Christendom, and placing it in the forefront of civilization in the world.

Why did nature so organize and develop Socrates, the greatest of ancient philosophers, as to teach his pupil Alcibiades, that "all is quite dark and obscure by the unassisted light of nature ; and that we cannot attain to certain knowledge, save by a revelation from him who cares for us?" And why does nature so develop nearly all our modern philosophers to profess Christianity, and strongly to believe in a Supreme Being, the Author of nature, and of the Bible ? All this goes to show that religion is deeply imbedded in the human mind ; and if religion is wrong, then nature must be wrong.

Christians admire the beauties of nature as much as infidels ; but their minds spontaneously rise from the grandeur of nature up to the unspeakable majesty and glory of nature's God.

Whilst, however, the Christian views with delight the flowers and trees, the land and sea, and the starry sky, and the wondrous design and economy in the vegetable and animal creation, yet his mind is appalled with the ever-recurring sin and misery within himself, and at the vast amount of sin and misery existing in his fellow-creatures. He feels, and the Bible tells him, he is a

sinner against a Holy God, that sin has produced its effect on nature, but that God has revealed a remedy for these disorders in his Word.

It is infidels themselves, therefore, who are foolish in neglecting the Gospel, and in opposing that which has been acknowledged to be the means of having healed so many broken hearts and wounded spirits; of reforming drunkards; of inducing the idle to be industrious, the filthy and unclean to be modest and chaste, the quarrelsome to be peaceful, the proud to be humble, the selfish and avaricious to be disinterested and benevolent, and the cruel to be tender-hearted,—that which has been the means of making better fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives, masters and servants, kings and subjects, families and nations.

It is a great mistake for infidels to say that all this good may be ascribed to science—commonly so called—or to something else than Christianity, and in spite of Christianity. Let infidels tell us what this something else is; and let them tell us why it is, with all their knowledge of science and of this something else, that there is no country or community of avowed or professed infidels; and why it is that they have allowed Christians, or professed Christians, to get ahead of them in the world, and to occupy the van of civilization?

How is it so commonly believed among us that infidels are in general only skulking here and there, as it were, among the dregs of society, generally ashamed of themselves and of their principles? How is it that their

public teachers are so few, their places of formal teaching so scarce, and that their writings, it is supposed, would become nearly extinct were it not that they gratify a morbid curiosity, or pander to the low and vitiated taste of the low and vitiated in society.

All this goes to show that it is far more difficult and unreasonable to believe in nature alone than in nature and nature's God, as we read of them in the Bible ; because, if nothing exists but nature, then we have to account at once for nature and all its difficulties ; how moral and physical evil and misery came into nature ; how man is vicious against and with his conscience ; how there seems to be no remedy in nature, and that the small appearance of remedy is generally ineffectual.

If nothing exists but nature, we have to account for the Bible with all its difficulties ; we have to account for all bad and good books ; for all religions, and for everything else ; and we must do it all without a guide or standard to judge by ; for nature seems to be pitted against nature everywhere without a referee or an umpire to decide.

All the foregoing absurdities or contradictions go to show how the god of this world has so blinded the eyes of avowed infidels, that they do not see or acknowledge these gross absurdities or contradictions, and go to prove the truth of the Scriptures in that remarkable statement, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."

Let not infidels therefore, persevere in their insane

endeavours to crush the Bible, for even according to their own views, the Bible must be natural; and so the more false and contradictory they make it appear to be, the worse they make nature. If the Bible deceives the people, nature must be the author of the deception; and nature so develops and organizes men, that they are capable of being deceived; all which, infidels must explain without any means whatever of explaining.

PART II.

A SUPREME BEING OTHER THAN THE BIBLE GOD, NOT TO BE CREDITED.

PROPOSITION.—TO BELIEVE IN A NON-BIBLE GOD, OR THAT
HE IS THE AUTHOR OF NATURE, LEADS TO BLIND FATALISM
AND INEXTRICABLE PERPLEXITY.

WHO, or what is this non-Bible God? Do we, or can we know anything of him? It will be extremely difficult for infidels to describe him at all, unless they use the Bible phraseology descriptive of God, or make him nature or part of nature.

Pantheists suggest that the Supreme Being is the soul of nature, that nature is a part of the Deity, and that it is the various modes of God's existence. This makes human beings, and everything or anything a part of God, at once destroying God's personality and our own personality, making God a vicious being wherever vice prevails, a suffering and miserable being wherever pain and misery exist.

Atheists and materialists have declared that they would rather believe in the Bible God than in a god who has not given man a revelation or explanation of nature ; because this non-Bible god must appear to be the most malignant, unwise, and capricious the human mind can conceive of, placing man here in a world of trouble, sin, and misery without the least explanation or hope of remedy.

It is an astounding fact that Deists, whilst they believe in a God and in the existence of evil, put this God at a vast distance from this evil as if he had nothing to do with it—as if he neither permitted nor caused it. But if he is the true God, he must either have permitted or caused all evil. This god either retires into space or stands an idle spectator of the affairs of the world—neither writing a book nor revealing to man in any way the origin, use, and remedy of all the evil among men ; he gives no account of himself ; and if there is no devil nor hell, why does he permit or cause so many human beings to be disturbed and frightened by such alleged fictions ?

The Bible God is much more wise and reasonable, for he inspired men to write the Bible, which gives an account of the origin of evil among men, and its grand remedy in the gospel of Christ.

Instead, therefore, of Deists blaming the Bible God, or demanding explanations from Christians about how the Bible God can be a God of love, and yet permit evil and prepare a hell for the wicked and unbelieving, when

his omnipotence might have prevented the evil which his omniscience must have foreseen—they should demand infinitely greater explanations from their own God, how he can be a God at all; and if he is the true God, why he permits or causes all these fears and evils to Christians, all the miseries of infidels, and all the woes of mankind without the least explanation or hope of remedy. According to deism, therefore, man has, in all by-gone ages, been groping in the dark, amid the bewilderment of blind fatalism, and is likely to do so to all eternity.

Have infidels ever seen their non-Bible god? Can they prove he exists? If so, has he retired into space and left nature to run itself down, or run itself wrong, like a clock or a watch, or does he exercise a superintendence and providence over nature?

This non-Bible god gives no account of himself, nor of the origin, use, and remedy of the present state of things; so that man is left to grope his way in the dark. This is blind fatalism.

He has given us no guide except nature, and nature is bad; for humanity, which is the best part of nature, is all wrong. Man is against man everywhere; hence our wars, rebellions, and quarrels; hence our laws, soldiers, police; hence our bolts, bars, walls, gates, prisons; and hence the moral and religious training necessary.

If then, there is only a silent, unknown, non-Bible god, all must be confusion, perplexity and bewilderment for ever. How then can we know our duty? Is there

any duty? How can we be responsible? Is there any responsibility? What standard has he given of right and wrong, of truth and error? Why do infidels speak and act as if something else existed which marred the beauty of nature, when they believe that nothing else can exist except nature, and their own non-Bible god? And yet they believe that it is neither the one nor the other that mars nature, but something else when there is nothing else; which is absurd.

They blame religion, especially Christianity, as being a curse to mankind, and yet according to their own views these very religions must either be the manifestations of their pantheistical deity, or the productions of nature, or their non-Bible god.

How comes it that the best, the most civilized part of humanity is where this non-Bible god is denied or disbelieved, and where the Bible God is best worshipped? How comes it that infidels do not worship their non-Bible god, that they neither teach their children nor any one else to love and praise him?

If there be a non-Bible god he allows such books as the Bible to teach that there is another God, and that it is the greatest sin to worship or believe in a non-Bible god. All these things show that infidels are unbelievers in their own views, that they are infidels of their own infidelity; but from some deep-seated, fearful, or diabolical cause they are become blinded to truth, reason, and common sense.

Their supreme being seems so unbecoming a wise

and good God, and so unsatisfactory to the rationality, to the hopes and aspirations with which man is constituted, as to be repugnant to man's very nature ; so that man is compelled by a moral and logical necessity to betake himself to the Bible, and the Bible God, in order to understand the reason of his own existence and the existence of all around him.

The Bible tells us truths simple, rational, and sublime, perfectly adapted to teach and impress mankind. It tells us the origin and purpose of nature ; of the nature, origin, and destiny of man ; of man's pristine, present, and future state ; of the introduction of sin and misery into this world ; and of the great remedy by which man—sinful, guilty, and miserable—can be made good, happy, and wise ; and can be saved by the crucified Redeemer.

PART III.



AN ARGUMENT

CONSTRUCTED ON POWER TO PROVE THE BEING OF GOD; OR,
AN ARGUMENT FOR THE DIVINE EXISTENCE DRAWN FROM
THE SENSES, REASON, AND EXPERIENCE.



SEEING, then, from the foregoing arguments, the great unreasonableness of believing in nothing but nature, or in a supreme being not the God of the Bible; many infidels demand from believers direct proof for the existence of the God of the Bible, and they speak as if they could not be satisfied with any proof less than can be tested by their senses, reason, and experience.

The following will, perhaps, satisfy them; if not, it will be their business to point out the fallacy in the argument:—

Will infidels grant that there is power, and that something powerful is that which produces change? If they grant this, then we have a starting point; and if not, then they must explain why this is the notion of power.

almost universally entertained, as nearly all books and conversations with living men will show.

We cannot believe that power exists merely in the abstract. There must be something powerful, and this something powerful is power in the concrete; power in the concrete must be something more than mere antecedent and consequent in cause and effect; because that would equalize them too much, and deprive cause of that relative importance which we give it.

It will not do to say that cause and effect is merely the immediate antecedent invariably and uniformly preceding the consequent; because how can that apply to the creation which was only a single case—one event, leaving no room, or scope or chance for invariability and uniformity. The antecedent was God, and the consequent was the creation. Moreover, we find that day and night are inseparably connected; the one the invariable and uniform antecedent; the other the consequent; and yet the one is not the cause of the other: and so of summer and winter, &c. So that those at least who believe in the Bible, or in nature, must consider that cause and effect must be something else than immediate antecedent and consequent, that besides these there seems to be a peculiar invisible tie or link that connects the effect with the cause, or rather there is a something commonly called power which essentially belongs to the antecedent when it is a cause, and which enables it to produce the effect. Every cause, therefore, implies power residing in substance to produce an effect.

The word power, is, perhaps, the greatest word in the English language, except Deity. No man can see power with the bodily eye, but he can see its effects or results.

This argument which I shall construct on Power was suggested to my mind when recently reading Rom. i. 20 : "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

Here invisible things are said to be clearly seen, which is an apparent contradiction. But that which is invisible to the bodily eye may be as clearly seen by the understanding as any material object is by the bodily eye. The things here that are at once invisible and clearly seen are Power and Godhead ; these are understood by the things that are made, viz., the works of creation.

The understanding or sight of the mind is as trustworthy as that of the bodily eye—perhaps even more correct than it ; so that infidels are without excuse if they do not apply their understanding as well as their senses. A blind man may in this way see better than a man not blind, for he may have a better understanding : this may seem paradoxical, yet it was true in the case of Homer, Milton, and others.

The fact is, that a seeing man can see neither God nor his fellow-men with the bodily eye. He can only see, as it were, the shell of man—the house his better part lives in—his body. The soul looks out at the windows

of the eyes, and has communication with the outer world by the ears and other avenues.

This is stated to show that we need not be surprised though we cannot see God with the bodily eye. It is not necessary; we can get on well enough without seeing the souls of our fellow-men, or even our own souls with our bodily eyes. We have got an understanding, and can see the effects of other men's understanding, and the effects of God's understanding; and thus we can see God in his works of creation, for we perceive a wonderful design and contrivance everywhere around us, infinitely superior to the skill of man.

But there are some who say that the soul is matter, or a quality of matter, and that there is nothing in existence but matter and its qualities. Now, if such persons are to be reasoned with, we would say to them—What is matter? Does it or does it not essentially think, for the essence of all matter must be the same everywhere?

We agree that matter everywhere has extension, shape, colour, capability of motion or rest, and capability of being divided. Now, if these are the essential qualities of matter, how can they, by any combination, produce thought; if thought be not in the separate parts? How can something come out of nothing?

Now we have no evidence that stones and dust, water, air, and fire think in their separate state; how then can we believe that some, or all of these, in the peculiar organization man—can think? that is just begging the whole question, taking for granted what has to be proved; and

they have to account for the origin and progress of this peculiar organization—man. Matter and motion seem to be influenced entirely by something external; but men have a power, called will, to determine themselves by an inward and voluntary principle. The soul, notwithstanding the state of the body, is conscious of its own operations. The body is felt to be the instrument of the soul, and as the instrument is fit or unfit, so are the operations of the soul more or less perfect. No man can form a better idea of a material soul, or a soul a quality of matter, than of an immaterial soul. We can understand the nature of a soul perhaps better than we can the nature of the body. We know the one from the other by their qualities. We cannot form a material idea of an immaterial spirit. It is very difficult or impossible to know the essence of either matter or mind. If extension be the essence of matter, and thought the essence of mind, then we cannot go farther and explain these more simply; we cannot open up the secrets of nature and fully comprehend the essences of things; but by taking the distinct qualities of matter and mind, we are able to prove the existence of mind or soul, perhaps more easily than we can prove matter to exist. We can no more conceive how any modification of matter can produce thinking, or the power of thought, than that any modifications of sound should produce seeing. God might superadd to some matter a faculty of thought; but then, that would no longer be matter, but matter and something else added to it. There is therefore in man

a substance that thinks, and is distinct from the other substance matter.

I have entered more fully into this subject here than I at first intended, because some have declared that matter is the only substance that exists; and that soul, mind, spirit, life, &c. are its qualities. This belief, of course, would do away with the soul's existing separately from the body and with all the Christian's belief.

After this digression I would say, returning to the main subject, that the Bible is full of allusions to God's power, as for example—"Lord," "Almighty," "Power belongs to God," "Thine is the power," "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," "Upholding all things by the word of his power," "The Gospel is the power of God."

Nature is also full of the manifestations of Power. Power is perceived in the laws of matter and mind; in the adaptation of means to an end; in thought, reason, conscience, will, feeling; in beauty, order, principle, truth, opinion, words, actions.

Power, as we have already said, belongs to something powerful, and it is this something powerful that produces change. Every change is an effect, and every effect necessitates a cause. These truths all men are led to believe by their common sense, reason, and experience. And as infidels ground all their knowledge and belief on their senses, reason, and experience, they cannot object to abide by these grounds.

All nature seems to consist of things that are always changing. We know of nothing in nature that remains always the same ; at least, it is an axiom with materialists that motion is an essential quality of matter. And an ancient writer, of great ability—viz., Philo, the contemporary of Josephus—says, “ Everything which is the subject of our senses exists in birth and in change, and is not always in the same condition ; therefore, since this world is visible, and the object of our external senses, it follows of necessity, that it must have been created ; and therefore God, for a wise purpose, has recorded its creation in the books of Moses.”

Even Thomas Paine, in his “ Age of Reason,” makes the following important statement on this point :—

“ It is comfortable to live under the belief of the existence of an infinitely protecting power ; and it is an addition to that comfort to know that such a belief is not a mere conceit of the imagination, nor a belief founded only on tradition or received opinion, but is a belief deducible by the action of reason upon the things that compose the system of the universe ; a belief arising out of visible facts ; and so demonstrable is the truth of this belief, that if no such belief had existed, the persons who now controvert it would have been the persons who would have produced and propagated it, because by beginning to reason they would have been led on to reason progressively to the end, and thereby have discovered that matter and all the properties it has will not account for the system of the

universe, and that there must necessarily be a superior cause."

Man, with his powers of intelligence, can trace up nature by the process of cause and effect for at least a few thousand years; sacred history tells us of the succession of events for nearly six thousand years. Man has no experience beyond the age of man, or beyond the oldest chronology. Man's general information or reasoning cannot enable him to plunge deeper into the depths of time than his inferences from recent geological discoveries. But though man discovers and traces cause and effect in nature up to a certain period of time, he can go no further; there the evidence of cause and effect in nature ceases; there all traces of it are lost to the human understanding; so that man, reasoning from causation, must believe that nature at that period, or at some period of time, was caused, and therefore had a beginning, for "we cannot get something out of nothing." And if caused, it must have been by a Being greater than nature, for the cause is always greater than the effect. This great and powerful Being we call God; and therefore, the Bible is right when it says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and "That the things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear."

We repeat, that since man has no evidence from his senses, reason, and experience that nature, at any period of time, was self-existent or eternal, he must believe in

the only other alternative, viz., that nature was caused and began to be.

To say, as some infidels do, "We know that nature exists now because we see it; and as we have no evidence that any being caused it, we must believe that it always existed," is fallacious; because, if they believe that nature always existed, their experience, and the experience of man cannot be the ground of so extensive a belief; and they overlook the fact that causation is traceable up to the limits of man's experience, at which point, or some point in time, it is inferred from the principle of causation, that nature was then caused; and this is some evidence that some being having the power—caused it.

We know of no man, who has experienced anything, to be self-existent or eternal. All men are conscious of causation, and therefore the principle of causation is the only alternative, exclusive of revelation, that man can believe to be true in connection with his reasoning on the origin of nature, if he reasons from experience. How, then, without any evidence from experience, can atheists or materialists say that nature always existed, or is self-existent?

To prove that cause and effect have operated in an eternal series in nature, man must have existed eternally, or man must have eternal evidence, which he has not. To suppose, therefore, that nature consists of matter having an eternal series of changes, is to suppose what

is incapable of proof; and yet infidels profess to believe or know only what is proved by the senses, reason, and experience. To suppose also that nature is self-existent, and at the same time changing in all its parts, is to suppose a thing to be the same and different at the same time; and reason, which is only a small part of nature, cannot grasp the whole, and pronounce the whole to be self-existent or eternal without sufficient data from experience for reason to work upon.

One great reason for believing that nature is not self-existent or eternal is, that, so far as we know, its parts are always changing. It is made up of parts, and these changes must have a cause. The world does not necessarily exist, because of its mutability; so that eternity and immutability are terms of the same import, or that eternity implies immutability. No being can produce itself, nor give being to itself; for this would suppose that a thing was at once both cause and effect, or that it existed before it existed to cause itself to exist; which is absurd.

Every being must either exist of itself or not of itself. That which exists not of itself, must derive its existence from some other, and so be dependent on that other. But the root of the existence of any independent being can be sought for no where but in itself.

There must be an independent being, because if there was not at least one independent being, nothing could exist at all. The universe could not produce itself; nor could any part of it produce itself and then produce

the rest, else a thing would act before it existed ; which is absurd.

We know that cause always precedes effect ; but if nature be eternal, then the effect must be as eternal as the cause : the one cannot be prior to the other, for nature includes both. If so, then every effect and every cause in the whole eternal series must occur at the same instant, else those going before will be more eternal than those coming after ; all which is contrary to reason.

It seems to me, therefore, that the word "series," connected with eternal, is a contradiction in terms ; so that nature cannot be eternal, but its cause must be eternal, else there would be a cause, the cause of the cause of nature, which the infidel cannot believe if he founds his unbelief on experience.

If no cause in nature is eternal, how can a series of non-eternal causes constitute an eternal series ? Nature, if it alone exists, is not cause merely, but cause and effect combined ; and if so, then in nature, effect must have a share in its own cause, and cause must have help from its own effect to produce that effect ; all which confounds our ideas of cause and effect ; which ideas are that cause precedes effect, and that they are distinct.

It is clear, therefore, that the infidel involves himself in contradictions, and assumes the whole question in dispute without the shadow of a proof.

It is self-evident that nature must have either been caused or not ; we have shown that it has been caused ; and if caused, the cause of nature must be either an

effect or not. If the cause of nature is the effect of another cause, then our mind must go back and think of a series of causes and effects, each of which is a cause and effect alternately, and the human mind is lost in trying to conceive of the first of the series. The human mind is not lost in trying to conceive of the cause of nature, but it is lost in trying to grapple with atheism or an eternal series of causes and effects.

The human mind is baffled in the effort to discover the first cause of the series of causes of nature, or what the nature of the series is; and with a first in the series all the rest are effects; but without a first cause in the series there can be no series at all. The human mind is therefore obliged to settle down in the belief that the cause of nature is not an effect, but uncaused, and therefore an eternal powerful being, and that is God. Atheism and Infidelity are consequently untrue.

Here, then, we have proved the existence of the Bible God and three of his incommunicable attributes, viz., omnipotence, unchangeableness, and eternity. His omnipotence in making nature; his unchangeableness and eternity in being uncaused.

The Bible says that God is omniscient. We find in nature much intelligence and wisdom, and many marks of wonderful design and skill, therefore the cause of nature must be an intelligent and wise designer; and it accords with our reason to suppose that God, the cause or author of nature, knows all about nature, for he made it. And since we know that nature has

gone wrong, the cause or author of nature must know not only all about nature, but also the cause of nature's going wrong, and the remedy.

God, the cause of nature, must know everything, for nothing exists but himself and nature. If he does not know everything, then there is something in himself, or in nature, he does not know. If there is something in nature he does not know, then how could he have caused it; and if there is something in himself he does not know, then who can tell whether that is the case.

It is therefore proved that God is omniscient, and if so, it is reasonable to suppose that he would reveal to man the remedy to redeem fallen man, and thus a revelation is both possible and probable. Man evidently needs a remedy, and it is more godlike to enlighten man on this all-important subject, than to keep him in ignorance.

The Bible claims to be such a revelation; it speaks to men's conscience with a superhuman power; the internal and external evidence of its divinity have never been disproved. We find in the Bible the highest knowledge and wisdom; and it says that God is one who knows all things; therefore the Bible God is the only true God.

But the Bible says that God is also omnipresent. Keeping in mind the foregoing arguments, we are forced to admit that there can be no place where God is not, he must be everywhere. If anywhere could be supposed to be where God is not, then how could God

have caused or made that where without being there. The making or causing of anything, or place, or space, implies something powerful to make it; we have shown that God must be that power; and he must have been everywhere to make everywhere; and since everywhere always needs something powerful to uphold it, therefore God is, has been, and shall be everywhere to uphold everywhere; therefore he is omnipresent.

We have now shown that God is one omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and eternal Being. These are the incommunicable attributes or godhead of the Deity; and can be more or less clearly seen in his works of creation by our understanding. All this description of Deity accords with the Bible, with nature, man's conscience, reason, and experience; and, therefore, the Bible God must be the only true God, and ought to be worshipped accordingly.

The following grand objection has been started by, perhaps, the most noted living atheist in this country, (Mr. Bradlaugh or "Iconoclast," who has an extraordinary talent for public speaking and debate; but, though his declamatory powers are greater than Mr. Holyoake's, his logical and philosophical powers are weaker.) Mr. Bradlaugh tries to make his grand objection assume the form of a dilemma, and it is the following: "If the universe is created, it must be by something the same as itself, or by something different from itself. It cannot be created by anything the same as itself, as then it would only be the extension of the same existence, and

therefore there would be no difference between the creature and the Creator. It could not be by anything different from itself, because things that have nothing in common with each other cannot be understood by means of each other." And thus he would infer that we have no reason to believe that the universe was created at all.

This objection is rather ingenious, still we consider it to be more plausible than valid; because, admitting that were the universe something the same as its Creator, it would then be only an extension of the Creator; this gets rid of one horn of the dilemma. Yet we do not admit the truth of the second part of the objection, which seems only an assumption; for the creature, man, seems to have something in common with the Creator, viz., God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul, and our first parents were made in God's image and likeness—in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. It is not at all, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that God, the Creator, being a spirit, could give the creature, man, who has a spirit, power to know him more or less, to know the relationship between the Creator and creature, and to understand his obligations and duty; so that this grand argument is demolished and falls to the ground.

The Bible God might be shown to be still more great and lovely, when we consider for a little that wonderful and Godlike idea implied in the term, "The grace of God." In it are sweetly blended God's justice, mercy,

and love. Grace (*χάρις*) favour, gift, joy, thanks—what a magnificently precious, undeserved favour! “Christ gave himself for our sins.” “By grace are ye saved.” “The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

We must take our salvation as an undeserved favour, a free gift. What a stupendous blessing! This grace of God in Christ causes such joy and thanks in the believer that he considers time too short and eternity not too long to express it. Amid his joy and thanks, and love for the Redeemer, the Christian forgets, as it were, not only all his troubles, but would hazard his life, his all—for the sake of Christ.

This grace of God is even more important to the Christian than “power,” and an argument might, perhaps, be logically constructed on the term Christian grace to prove the truth of Christianity—at all events, God’s grace is an invincible argument or evidence, in every renewed heart, that Christianity is divine.

CONCLUSION.

AND now, in conclusion, it may be asked, what have infidels to offer to man as a substitute for the Bible and Christianity, so that man, laden with iniquity and burdened with sorrow, may be good, wise, and happy?

What is there better than Christianity to satisfy the cravings and yearnings of the human soul after happiness and truth? I could never understand the principles of infidels, nor get at the foundation of their belief. Their few obscure opinions are ever changing with the novelty of some new theory. They used to believe in a fortuitous concourse of atoms—science has exploded that; so that now we never hear of it. The opinions really good, which they possess, were either borrowed from Christianity, or else Christians possess them to at least as great a degree.

If men were not counteracted and kept in check by some religion or other, or if the Bible and Christianity were swept from the face of the earth, and the idea of the Bible God obliterated, it is to be feared that men would become so corrupt as “to call evil good, and good evil; put light for darkness, and darkness for

light;" there would be no virtuous cement to bind society for safety and good order; and men would so "bite and devour one another, as to be destroyed one of another."

Historians and travellers tell us that those peoples who take the Bible as their best and surest guide, are the most civilized on the face of the earth; that those who believe in one God, but disbelieve the Bible, in whole or part, are less civilized than Christians; that Polytheists are still less civilized; and that the farther a people departs from the Bible God, the more degraded, barbarous, and savage that people becomes, and the less exertion does that nation make to reform itself.

"The Bible has taken greater hold on the world than any other book. The literature of ancient Greece and Rome has not half the influence of the Bible, nor has the Koran, nor the book of Confucius such hold on man, even though these books are adapted to coincide with man's fallen nature. The Bible is read in tens of thousands of pulpits every week. It is read by millions of people in their own houses all over the world, in cottages and palaces; and Christian missionaries are scattered everywhere, disseminating the truth as it is in Jesus, by means of preaching, conversation, Bibles, and Christian literature,—all tending to comfort and instruct man amid his many troubles, and to give patience and hope amid trials."

Here, then, is a great inducement for mankind to study the Bible; it tends to make man good and great here,

and infinitely greater and happier hereafter. We need not doubt its divinity; for when with a proper spirit we examine well the Bible itself and the evidences of its truth we will be satisfied that it is divine. It gives us a transcript of God's character, and of man's nature, and though there are confessedly many things in it hard to be understood, yet mere difficulties never prove a thing to be untrue.

There are mysteries and apparent discrepancies, but no real contradictions. There is much in the Bible that transcends reason, but nothing contrary to reason. Many of the Bible difficulties vanish from the minds of those who read it with humble, prayerful hearts—hearts, bent on holiness, happiness, and duty,—hearts sick of this world's folly, sins, and vexations,—hearts yearning after truth, peace and joy. Many of the Bible difficulties will vanish also when we read the works or commentaries of such excellent and learned divines as Drs. Paley, Chalmers, and Clarke; and the Rev. Messrs. Henry, Brown, Scott and Barnes; and, though each commentary may have a shade of difference, yet they all tend to show the Bible to be divine, to illustrate its blessed truths, and to lead man to Christ, to duty, and to glory.

Why do infidels reject the blessed Saviour? Surely, they feel their own need of some Saviour, and believe that those around them have the same need.

Was there ever such a friend of humanity as Christ was? Surely his philanthropy, humility, sorrow and

sufferings in behalf of mankind were sufficient? No stain ever rested on his character. He went about doing such wonderful deeds, and speaking such wonderful truths, to benefit the bodies and souls of men here and hereafter, as proved him to be divine as well as human. He was emphatically the poor and distressed man's friend. His god-like life and agonizing death cry aloud for us to come to him by faith. Our sins, necessities, troubles, miseries, and fears should impel us to Christ.

In the Bible, God sweetly and condescendingly invites us to come to him: there the glorious reward of Heaven is offered. Through Christ, we can call God—Father; Christ—brother; and the Holy Spirit—Comforter: we can have our sins forgiven, our consciences at peace, and our souls in an ecstasy of joyful hope.

Let no man remain an infidel because he cannot understand everything in the Bible; or why God made a world in which so much sin and suffering should occur. If we really believe that there is a God, and in the perfection of his attributes, that he is the sovereign of providence and the source of revelation, we should assume the excellency of his administration on the credit of its author. Children, in many things, thus trust their parents; and should not rational men have at least as much confidence in the Almighty God? What else can man do but trust in God amid the ten thousand mysteries in nature, in providence, and in the Bible,

whose secrets will not yield to the severest exercise of thought!

Man can know as much of God, of nature, and of duty as it is necessary for him to know. God has explained much in his works, and in his Word. God's ways, of necessity, exceed the limits of man's comprehension. God understands all, and that should satisfy us.

Let no man remain an infidel because he is taught in the Bible that an all-powerful, omniscient, holy, loving God has permitted evil among angels and men, and made a hell for the wicked, ungodly, and unbelieving. God could not make men free agents and not free agents at the same time. If God had said to angels and to men, "there is something you are to do; you must do it; I will compel you to do it," this would have made men mere machines, and God would have been considered despotic and tyrannical. Angels and men were made free agents, liable to disobey and deteriorate; God's mere foreknowledge of sin could not have caused sin; yet God, in his love, has provided the wonderful remedy for man in the blessed Gospel.

We cannot fully comprehend the wonderful power which intelligent free agents have; yet these intelligent free agents feel that within them which they cannot explain. This feeling is manifested in responsibility, accountability and obligation; and in liability to praise, blame, reward, punishment; and this feeling of responsi-

bility in man is nearly universal toward a Supreme Being, the author of nature; for words to express such feelings are to be found in all languages.

And there may be something in connection with God's grace in Christ, and in the awful doom of the devils and lost souls of men, to secure the free agency of the un-fallen angels and redeemed men in Heaven from ever swerving from holiness and rectitude.

Let infidels, therefore, take heed how they imperil their own souls, and the souls of others. We say this to them in love, for it becomes the Christian not only to be powerful in argument, but to be distinguished for meekness, kindness and love. Let Christians pray for infidels that their blindness and hardness of heart may be removed, so that they may no longer grope in the darkness, delusion, and danger of blind fatalism, but may have the grace of the Holy Spirit, and come to Christ and be saved.

Let Christians defend the Bible, especially by a good example, a character and conduct becoming the Gospel, and they will thus show to infidels that he is a free and a happy man whom the Gospel truth makes free. And moreover let those who love the Saviour remember to be instant in season and out of season to win souls, believing that even the mere utterance of the truth as it is in Jesus by a true Christian, "is a sweet savour to God, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear;" and if this be so, much more will it be to God's glory to convince, exhort, entreat, and pray for the

infidel that he may accept Christ as his Saviour, and the Bible as a divine guide.

May God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, grant his blessing on this production, so that it may be instrumental in winning souls to Christ, and in confirming believers in the faith!

FINIS.



